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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 126951

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPDC](#) [PREL](#) [TX](#)
SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S LETTER TO NEW FOREIGN MINISTER

1. CHARGE IS REQUESTED TO DELIVER THE LETTER IN PARA TWO BELOW TO NEW FOREIGN MINISTER RASHID MEREDOV AT THE EARLIEST APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY. NO SIGNED ORIGINAL WILL FOLLOW.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

DEAR MR. MINISTER:

MY SINCEREST CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR APPOINTMENT AS TURKMENISTAN'S NEW FOREIGN MINISTER.

THE UNITED STATES WAS AN EARLY AND FIRM SUPPORTER OF TURKMENISTAN'S INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY, AND WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO BUILDING A STRONG RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. WE SHARE MANY INTERESTS, ESPECIALLY BUILDING PROSPEROUS, STABLE SOCIETIES IN CENTRAL ASIA, COMBATING NARCOTICS AND TERRORISM, AND DEVELOPING THE HYDROCARBON RESOURCES OF THE CASPIAN REGION. IT HAD BEEN OUR BELIEF THAT TURKMENISTAN WAS ONE OF THE FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS BEST PLACED TO MAKE THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY AND TO A MARKET ECONOMY, WHICH WE BELIEVE IS THE BEST GUARANTOR OF STABILITY. YOUR COUNTRY IS BLESSED WITH BOTH ABUNDANT NATURAL RESOURCES, AND HARD-WORKING, WELL-EDUCATED, TALENTED PEOPLE. WE HAD HOPED TO HELP THAT TRANSITION AND TO SEE OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS BECOME EVER CLOSER. WE REGRET THAT THIS HAS NOT BEEN THE CASE. FOR OUR PART, WE WOULD LIKE TO TURN THIS SITUATION AROUND.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE UNITED STATES AND TURKMENISTAN CAN FIND SPECIFIC AREAS OF COOPERATION THAT CAN HELP TURKMENISTAN ACHIEVE ITS GOALS AND THAT WILL LEAD TO PRODUCTIVE RELATIONS. AS ONE EXAMPLE, WE VIEW PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE TIES AS A NECESSARY AND POWERFUL PRELUDE TO BROADER GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT TIES. OUR CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS SERVE TO INCREASE THE TURKMEN PEOPLE'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE UNITED STATES, AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE'S UNDERSTANDING OF TURKMENISTAN. WE CAN ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR ECONOMY AND YOUR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS BY PROVIDING NEEDED LANGUAGE AND ECONOMIC SKILLS.

IT IS CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THESE PROGRAMS THAT PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE EXIT VISAS IN A TIMELY AND IMPARTIAL MANNER. MORE TO THE POINT, WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE GOVERNMENT OF TURKMENISTAN DO AWAY WITH EXIT VISAS ALTOGETHER. THEY ARE A LEGACY OF THE SOVIET PAST THAT PRESENT AN IMPEDIMENT TO OUR TIES. THERE ARE MANY OTHER MEASURES BEYOND THESE IMMEDIATE ISSUES THAT WE CAN UNDERTAKE. I WOULD WELCOME YOUR THOUGHTS.

IN CLOSING, I WISH YOU EVERY SUCCESS IN YOUR NEW POSITION AND TO REITERATE UNITED STATES SUPPORT FOR TURKMENISTAN'S INDEPENDENCE AND FOR ITS FUTURE PROSPERITY.

SINCERELY,

COLIN L. POWELL

END TEXT.

POWELL